## Context 1 EDUCATION SYSTEMS: Evidence Base for Guiding Questions

### a. Reading domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Flows and Organizational Learning</th>
<th>Coherence: Key aspects of the system are coherent with the learning objectives outlined in the curriculum. The protocols and forces needed to ensure that coherence is realized are in place.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>At the very center of a learning coherent curriculum implementation system are the learning objectives outlined in the curriculum. One can argue that the sole purpose of an education system is to establish those learning objectives and do the work necessary to ensure that all children achieve them: to train teachers to be able to teach in ways that ensure the students can achieve the learning objectives; to develop and distribute TLMs that convey and help support the teaching and learning needed for the students to achieve the learning objectives; to coach in ways that enable teachers to teach in ways that ensure their students can achieve the learning objectives; and to develop and administer tests to determine the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### b. Standards

- Performance data, among others.
- Such as student assessment and teacher course/programs, classroom observation
- Curriculum, TLMs, TE/TPD

### c. Evidence

- The notion of organizational learning was introduced in the book, *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1990). It has since become the focus of many organizations and systems. USAID’s LEARN and MERL efforts have been developed to facilitate such learning for projects and the systems that projects are designed to support (https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/learn-activity-level-merl-plan). Such learning is critical to the functioning of a learning coherent system, and it is driven by data that diagnose how well various aspects of that system are performing in relation to improved learning outcomes: student achievement data, teacher performance data, textbook arrivals at schools, etc. Moreover, such a system learning is fundamental to successful scale-up and sustainability.

### Citations

- Crouch and DeStefano, 2015
- Destefano and Healey, 2016
### Protocols and institutional forces:

Protocols outlining that the measures to be taken, and the institutional forces needed to ensure that the protocols are implemented, are in place.

- A protocol outlines a series of steps or procedures that are to be undertaken when particular conditions are met. The health field has protocols that outline the exact procedures that must be undertaken when someone enters the emergency room with chest pains, or when an ambulance arrives at the scene of an accident where people are unconscious. Schools in the US have protocols for when there is an active shooter within one mile radius of the school. For systems to run properly, they must have a robust set of protocols that outline what actions need to be taken when a particular condition has been met (i.e., a set of curricular learning objectives has been revised and approved by the Minister of Education). But what impels people to implement these protocols? In a hospital emergency room, the life of the patient impels doctors and nurses to follow the protocols. Additionally, the threat of a lawsuit may impel them should the patient die, and the protocols were not followed. But in less critical situations (i.e., communicating revised learning objectives to key actors in the education system), many people need to be impelled to implement a protocol. What kinds of forces can impel people to do what they are expected to do? Job descriptions and performance appraisal systems can exert such force (Healey, 2012). Additionally, incentives and accountability pressure can exert such force.

### Level of Commitment:

There is a high level of commitment for all of the standards presented in this table.

- For reform of any kind to be successful, key actors throughout the system must not only demand it, but they must own it as well. This means that there must be a high level of commitment for all of the reforms/standards called for here.

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**References:**


Elmore, 1996

Healey and DeStefano, 1997b

Taylor et al., 1999

Florian, 2000


Coburn, 2003

Elías et al., 2003

Samoff et al., 2003

Vargo, 2004


Robinson, Winthrop, and McGivney, 2016


Healey and DeStefano, 1997b

Florian, 2000

Hatch, 2000


Glennan et al, 2004c

Robinson, Winthrop, and McGivney, 2016

Healey and DeStefano, 1997b

Florian, 2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards (Evidence-Based Standards, Norms, &amp; Policies)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Education policy/plans prioritize student learning and highlight the importance of literacy and (EGR). **Policy/plan has a vision of a learning coherent curriculum implementation system to guide reforms.** New/revised literacy learning objectives are always communicated to key actors in the curriculum implementation system. The literacy curriculum promotes and guides classroom assessment and the use of student assessment data for improved learning. **● For an education system to yield sustained improved learning outcomes, it must be structured and oriented in a way that focuses all actors’ work primarily on improved learning outcomes. This focus of the system must be expressed repeatedly by government leadership, and it must eventually be owned by all actors such that the organizational culture of the entire system is about improved learning outcomes. Additionally, unless EGR is highlighted in some high-order official document (i.e., the education policy), its central importance to the whole educational endeavor will overlooked. **● To transform an existing system to one that performs well with regard to improved learning outcomes, one must have a vision (as opposed to a vision statement) of what that improved system looks like and how it functions. Without such a vision, reforms tend to move a system in multiple directions that do not add up to a coherent whole. **● These learning objectives must also be communicated to all key actors in the curriculum implementation system such that those actors can orient their work toward their achievement. **● Classroom assessment has been shown to be an important instructional technique to get children to read/learn. This being the case, the practice of classroom assessment should be embedded in the curriculum to both guide and encourage its use as a pedagogical technique. It should be noted that USAID sees the use of such formative assessment to inform instruction as a priority. **Altinyelken, Hulya K., Sarah Moorcroft, and Hilde van der Draai. “The dilemmas and complexities of implementing language-in-education policies: Perspectives from urban and rural contexts in Uganda.” International Journal of Educational Development, 36, (2014): 90-99.  
Pritchard, 2015  
Crouch and Destefano, 2015  
Robinson, Winthrop, and McGivney, 2016  
Destefano and Healey, 2016  
Coburn, 2003  
Elias et al, 2003  
Samoff et al, 2003  
Bodily et al, 2004  
Robinson, Winthrop, and McGivney, 2016  
Destefano and Healey, 2016  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context 2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Evidence Base for Guiding Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Reading domain</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Standards (Evidence-Based Standards, Norms, & Policies)** | Educators are fully aware of government mandated policies, strategies, and plans related to EGR. | ● A fundamental aspect of a learning coherent curriculum implementation system is the communication of the learning objectives and relevant policies related to them to all key actors in the system.  
● Strong monitoring systems and connections with education system authorities are important for both communicating curricular expectations to schools, as well as mitigating the likelihood that school leaders will reinterpret or ignore policy during implementation.  
● Successful policy implementation in schools, such as implementing a new curriculum, requires educators to understand and own the policy. | Crouch and Detieffano, 2015  
| **Texts (High-Quality Teaching and Learning Materials)** | Educators are responsible for selecting literacy TLMs that align with enrollment and language needs, and have the requisite funds to do so. | ● Children learn best and most efficiently when they are taught in a familiar language. High-quality materials should be used for teaching and learning and should be readily available.  
### Teachers (Effective Teachers and Classroom Instruction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators receive pre-service teacher education (TE) and in-service professional development (PD) in EGR instruction.</th>
<th>A quality of teacher pre-service education and in-service professional development is a factor that impacts teachers’ ability to successfully implement a curriculum.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators are able to effectively implement evidence-based EGR instruction.</td>
<td>- A scaffolded approach to literacy instruction, involving the gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student, has been applied effectively in developing country contexts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- In places where teachers receive little PD in literacy instruction, lesson plans that include some level of scripting for the teacher to follow can be helpful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Dyer, 2007
- Piper, Benjamin, Yasmin Sitabkhan, Jessica Mejia, and Kellie Bettis. *Effectiveness of teachers' guides in the Global South: Scripting, learning outcomes, and
Mentors (Effective Coaches and Mentors)

| Educators receive individual coaching and/or mentoring related to EGR instruction. | ● Coaching can help teachers to critically examine their instructional practices and apply specific approaches toward improving their approach.  
● Coaching can have a positive impact on teacher instructional practices and student learning outcomes.  
● Teachers are more receptive to coaching when it is not punitive or evaluative, but rather, supportive of the shared goal of improved learning.  
● In contexts where teachers receive little PD specific to literacy instruction, directive coaching with targeted feedback that is tied to instructional practices can be helpful.  
Joyce, Bruce, and Beverly Showers. Student Achievement through Staff Development. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2002.  

Administrators (Quality Administrative Support & Supervision)

| School leaders receive evidence-based and coherent PD in literacy instructional approaches in order to support and supervise educators.  
School leaders use student assessment and classroom observation data to provide extra support.  
School leaders facilitate a combination of support and supervision. | ● The quality of teacher pre-service education and in-service professional development is a factor that impacts teachers’ ability to successfully implement a curriculum.  
● To reinforce learning, school leaders should have the authority and means to acquire resources directly.  
● School leaders need to have clear management authority over staff, instructional time, TLM selection, teacher PD and evaluation, and funds to procure resources.  
● Higher school-management capacity in the areas of operations, monitoring, target-setting, and people is correlated with better student outcomes.  
● School leaders’ acceptance and promotion of teacher PD through coaching is correlated with teachers’ acceptance of and participation in coaching.  
Akyeampong, et. al., 2011  
Anderson and Palm, 2017  
Literacy praDyer, 2007  

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Support & Administrative Support & Supervision (Evidence Document for Printing)  
School leaders facilitate a combination of support and supervision. School leaders use student assessment and classroom observation data to provide extra support. School leaders receive evidence-based and coherent PD in literacy instructional approaches in order to support and supervise educators.
| Regular Assessments (Assessments Inform Instruction) | Educators receive aggregate results of externally administered reading assessments and use data to inform instructional practices. | Valid, reliable data on student reading ability in the early grades supports government, donor, and implementer efforts to improve literacy outcomes.  
For assessment data to inform instruction, educators must believe in its importance, agree they have a role in responding to data, be able to access the data, and have time and resources to interpret the data.  
Formative assessment has the capacity to raise learning standards among teachers and students. Classroom observation that includes a specific formative feedback discussion (about observation data) between a coach or mentor and an educator can lead to improved practice.  
Andersson and Palm, 2017  
| Language | Children learn best and most efficiently when they are taught in a familiar language. High-quality materials should be used for teaching and learning and, therefore, should be readily available. | Ball, 2011  
Benson, 2005  
Benson, 2010  
Brown, 2011  
Dutcher, 1994  
Hovens, 2003  
Mullis, Martin, Foy, and Drucker, 2012  
Hungi & Thuku, 2010  
Plefpsen et al., 2015  
Sichra, 1992  
Smits, Haisman, and Krujiff, 2008  
Walter and Chuo, 2012  
World Bank, 2005 |
| Gender | School leaders as well as educators are responsible for creating a safe and welcoming learning environment that is free from gender-based violence and where female students, in particular, have access to sanitary facilities.  
RTI International, 2015  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Gender-equitable teaching practices, such as giving participation opportunities equally to girls and boys during a lesson and ensuring that seating arrangements do not favor one gender over another will reduce gender imbalances.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School leaders can influence how inclusive their school’s learning environment is.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All teachers have a responsibility to educate all of their students, including those with disabilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Representing people with various disabilities in teaching and learning materials makes content more relatable to children who have a disability and provides them with positive role models.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations can and should be made wherever possible to make TLMs more accessible, including the use of various assistive technologies.</td>
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<td>Crisis and Conflict</td>
<td>Education can have the effect of nurturing ethnic and linguistic tolerance and promoting inclusivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools must be located in areas where children will be “safe from recruitment to armed forces, corporal punishment, or sexual abuse.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disciplinary approaches in the classroom can convey the extent to which violence is accepted. Corporal punishment promotes and normalizes violence, while non-violent, constructive approaches to classroom management convey peaceful ways of addressing conflict.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It may be necessary for school leaders and educators to address bias in the curriculum or in teaching and learning materials. Locally produced materials could be more appropriate, but the trade-off is that they may also be less polished or less scripted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Research shows that “ICT components should be aligned with pedagogy. In other words, if the underlying approach to literacy instruction is weak, it is unlikely that a limited, standalone intervention with a mobile phone, computer, or e-reader will produce significant change.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim, Boyle, Simmons Zuilkowski, Nakamura, 2016, p. 15</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Context 3 HOME and COMMUNITY: Evidence Base for Guiding Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Reading domain</th>
<th>b. Sub-reading domain</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Familial Demographics and Cultural Contexts | 3.1 Literacy and education levels of caregivers and others | • Mothers/other caregiver’s education level (i.e., has a high school certificate, is literate, etc.) is often related to children’s reading achievement.  
• Children’s literacy skills expand as caregivers’ education levels increase, together with greater engagement in literacy practices at home.  
• There is little conclusive evidence that literacy classes for caregivers increase student learning outcomes, but there is evidence that increased parental participation and empowerment support learning.  
• Caregivers from families with higher SES and literacy have been found to be significantly more involved in their children’s education and at school than caregivers from low SES and literacy families. | Research from the Global South:  

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1 Overarching reading domains are guided by Hess and Holloway’s (1984) reading domains in the home learning environment: (1) the value placed on reading; (2) the press for achievement; (3) the availability of reading materials; (4) reading to children; and (5) opportunities for verbal interaction, but expanded to account for current research and evidence on community opportunities for literacy development. Epstein’s (1990) type of family involvement also references: 1) providing healthy and safe home conditions for supporting educational progress (measured through 3.1 and 3.2 in this toolkit); 2) communication between schools and families about student progress (captured in Context 2 and 3.11); 3) parents’ participation in school activities and events (sub-reading domain 3.12); 4) parental involvement in learning at home (reading domain 3.9 and 3.11); 5) parental involvement in decision-making at school (reading domain 3.12); and 6) school and parent collaborations with communities (reading domains 3.6-3.8).
### 3.2 Family socio-economic status (SES)

**Note:** Education levels and SES are commonly linked, but are often separate measures in research and evaluation.

- Students with higher SES tend to participate more frequently in literacy-related activities outside of school, and they have greater exposure to text and print inside and outside the home. They often develop their phonemic awareness at different rates.
- Students whose parents have lower levels of education and lower levels of income benefit less from DR than groups with more highly educated parents and those who have higher levels of income.

**Research from the Global North:**
### 3.3 Language environment (i.e., monolingual, multilingual)

- Children who learn in a language they have a strong foundation in (i.e., home language) often have higher education indicators, including reading acquisition. "Moreover, use of L1 [first/home language] for assessment appears to be particularly beneficial for girls because any negative preconceptions on the part of teachers regarding girls' academic ability are challenged."
- "Despite a commonly held belief among some parents and teachers that L1 instruction might be unfavorable for L2 acquisition, extant evidence suggests that there is no disadvantage of L1 instruction in L2 language and literacy instruction, and L2 reading skills might develop faster if students have already developed reading skills in L1."

Research from the Global South:
- Ball, 2011
- Benson, 2005
- Benson, 2010
- Brown, 2011
- Hovens, 2003
- Mullis, Martin, Foy, and Drucker, 2012
- Hungi and Thuku, 2010
- Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2015
- Plefepsen et al., 2015
- Sichra, 1992
- Smits, Haisman, and Kruijff, 2008
- Spratt, King, and Bulat, 2013
- Walter and Chuo, 2012
- World Bank, 2005
- Hovens, 2002
- Ouane, 2010
- Dutcher, 1994
- Kim, Boyle, Simmons, Zuilkowski, Nakamura, 2016, p. 44

### 3.4 Access to ICT2 at home

- Family-owned technology or community-based technology may support literacy acquisition of key skills.

Research from the Global South:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability of Text and Literacy Programs</th>
<th>3.5 Access to print and text at home</th>
<th>The presence of print materials has been found to be an important factor in reading achievement in a number of countries.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6 Access to print and text in the community</td>
<td>Urban communities tend to have more signage, labels, and print than rural areas. There is little evidence that community libraries and community reading programs have an impact on literacy acquisition, although some programs have found potential effects of community libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.7 Access to technology and</td>
<td>Educational programs, such as educational TV or radio, can encourage children's literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research from the Global South:
- Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2017
- Mwoma, 2017
- Research from the Global South:
- Research from the Global South:
- Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2017
- Cao, Ramesh, Menendez, and Dayaratna, 2014

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2 Language Issues and ICT are their own reading domains under this table and therefore there are not separate equity analyses for these areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caregiver Engagement (and level of commitment) in Literacy Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.8 Access to extracurricular support (shadow education and tutoring programs)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participation in a community tutoring program, where trained high school graduates helped struggling readers, can have a positive effect on students’ reading scores. “Tutoring programs using volunteers from the community, older children or peers seem to show positive impact.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mixed effects of community tutoring and support on reading achievement were also found in UNICEF’s program in Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tajikistan, and Yemen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There are five recommended practices of engaging communities (professionals, organizations, and businesses): a) engage businesses in providing reading materials and print; b) create alliances with community leaders invested in literacy development; c) ensure that the education community (i.e., students, teachers, etc.) conducts literacy activities in the community; d) engage community volunteers in reading activities in school; and e) invite communities to design literacy activities in the learning environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community interventions have also been found to positively affect children’s participation in reading activities, although actual effects in reading scores were not observed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Research from the Global South: |

| 3.9 Home literacy practice & cultural factors |
| - There are significant relationships between parent-child reading and scores on reading assessments, even when demographic characteristics are accounted for. |
| - Playing of literacy games and other literacy traditions can be a strong predictor of reading scores; singing also encourages a love of language, rhythms of language, and phonemic awareness. The quality of the home literacy activities and cooperation has been found to affect literacy achievement in school. |
| - “Dialogic Reading [joint book reading] seems to have an impact on emergent literacy skills, specifically oral language skills (expressive vocabulary). However, most studies involve preschool or kindergarten students, and the only long-term study found no effects on reading skills in first and second grade. There is some evidence that Paired Reading and Hearing Reading may support children’s literacy skills.” |
| - In the Global North, “Senechal and Young (2008) suggested that programs that train parents to teach specific reading skills are more effective than programs that train parents.” |

| Research from the Global South: |
to listen to their children read or that train parents to read to their children.”

- Positive relationships between students’ motivation and volunteering to read at home and student achievement have been found.

- If caregivers perceive they play an important role in a child’s literacy development, and know how to get involved, they are more likely to encourage reading at home.

- The higher parents’/caregivers’ attitudes and engagement in reading activities at home, the higher grade one students’ abilities to decode text.

- Caregivers’ beliefs on the “purposes of reading and how children learn to read relate to children’s motivations for reading. Parents who believe that reading is a source of entertainment have children with more positive views about reading than do parents who emphasize the skills aspect of reading development.”

- If caregivers perceive they play an important role in a child’s literacy development, and know how to get involved, they are more likely to encourage reading at home. The higher parents’/caregivers’ attitudes and engagement in reading activities at home, the higher grade one students’ abilities to decode text. Caregivers’ beliefs on the “purposes of reading and how children learn to read relate to children’s motivations for reading. Parents who believe that reading is a source of entertainment have children with more positive views about reading than do parents who emphasize the skills aspect of reading development.”


Sylva et al, 2008


Research from the Global North:


Sénéchal, Monique. The Effect of Family Literacy Interventions on Children’s Acquisition of Reading: From Kindergarten to Grade 3. Portsmouth, NH: National Institute for Literacy, 2006.


Cao, Ramesh, Menendez, and Dayaratna, 2014, p.11 and 20

Research from the Global South:


#### 3.11 Caregivers'/Family involvement in monitoring children’s literacy and reading development

- Parents'/caregivers’ attitudes and engagement in reading activities at home can influence reading scores.
- Children can do better on reading assessments when their parents monitor even in the most basic of ways, like checking bags for homework.

#### 3.12 Caregivers'/Families' engagement in school activities and groups

- The evidence on the effectiveness of caregiver and community engagement in school activities and groups varies largely on the context and type of engagement. In the US, research has not consistently found that in-school parent engagement in literacy development promotes student achievement, and there is lack of conclusive evidence in the Global South.
- Some research suggests that community involvement (i.e., through SMCs and PTAs) can enhance a sense of ownership of the school, increase forms of democracy and accountability of education providers, and might in some cases improve educational attendance. However, there is contradictory evidence that in some cases (e.g., evidence in Malawi and Uganda) these bodies are ineffective and weak. There is little study of whether this type of engagement impacts literacy acquisition, as research often focuses on the community and caregiver participation process and less on direct impacts on literacy and learning outcomes.

#### Gender

- Both girls and boys benefit from engaging in literacy-related activities in the home (see articles in Park, 2008).
- Boys tend to prefer non-fiction literature, and girls prefer both non-fiction and fiction. Creating more types of text that are responsive to male and female preferences is important.

#### Disability

- In the Global South, there is little access to specialists like speech and language pathologists. Additionally, transportation is often an issue, making it difficult for students with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities to get to school, or to get to school safely.
- In the Global North, it has been found that students with disabilities do better (less behind and better grades) when their families are highly engaged in their education. Likewise, caregivers reported higher levels of quality of life and lower stress levels when they had positive partnerships with educators. Students with positive family trust levels are three times as likely, per one study, to have reading and math improvement. It is important to include caregivers in the process of monitoring students' progress (i.e., through individual participation process and less on direct impacts on literacy and learning outcomes).

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**Research from the Global South:**

- Hunt, 2007, p. 23
- Cao, Ramesh, Menendez, and Dayaratna, 2014, p. 28
- Research from the Global South
- Kabarere, Makewa, Muchee, and Role, 2013
- Management, and competitive research, 2017
- Research from the Global South:
- Hayes, Turnbull, & Moran, 2018
education plans).
• In the Global South, absence of family partnerships has been found to negatively influence teachers’ implementation of inclusive education. Some projects focus on preparing teachers to take on active roles in their classroom.
• USAID recognizes that community and family engagement helps remove barriers to quality education, mobilize resources, and increase accountability; family and school partnerships are important to reducing segregation of students with disabilities.

Crisis and conflict

• Early grade reading and literacy programs in crisis-affected contexts include both formal settings (i.e., schools) and non-formal settings, including community centers, homes, etc. and often include a range of age groups, ethnicities, genders, and vulnerable populations.
• “There is a clear need for programs that teach parents why literacy is important and how to support their children’s literacy. Parental support is essential during early childhood and may be particularly important in conflict and crisis-affected contexts, where the fragile environment may have influenced children’s health and development and families rarely have access to early childhood education of any sort.”
• Due to overcrowded learning environments, shortages of teachers, and disruptions in learning, engaging community and family members as educational supports and encouraging peer tutoring can be important in crisis-affected and post-conflict settings.


Elder and Kuja, 2018

Zakari and Bartlett, 2014


Zakari and Bartlett, 2014, p. 36